In “The Psychology of the Transference”, The Practice of Psychotherapy/CW (1966) Carl Jung used archetypical images to describe the analytic relationship. Throughout the series, the analytic couple is depicted in varying states where different feelings are evoked regarding what may be going on between the unconscious of the doctor and the patient. Using mythopoeic language, archetypical form and his psychological understanding of the transference and countertransference, Jung began to define aspects of what we are now calling the relational field and outlined the archetypical transformations of the analytic couple. In this seminar, we will read short segments from this seminal text and work with four archetypical images to evoke and amplify relational experiences from our clinical practice.

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DEEPENING THE WORK:
RELATIONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY
THROUGH A JUNGIAN LENS
YEAR II

A YEARLONG COURSE FOR LICENSED CLINICIANS

The history of psychoanalysis shows psychoanalysts of all persuasions arriving at a consensus that the relationship between therapist and patient is the central healing force in psychotherapy. Further, most depth therapists believe that the analyst’s experience of being in a relationship with the analysand - the analyst’s countertransference in the broadest sense of that term - is the crucial compass in guiding the course of the analyst’s work. By contrast, in the early years of the 20th century Freud wrote to Jung, advising him to “develop the thick skin we need in order to dominate the countertransference.” His recommendation was that for the analyst to effectively work with the intensity of the transference, he should be free of what Freud saw as neurotic emotional responses to the patient.

Eighty-five years later, Stephen Mitchell, a founder of the relational school, wrote: “Analysis is fundamentally dyadic...requiring the transformation of two people in their engagement with each other. The counterpart to the ability to influence constructively is the capacity to make oneself available to influence, to make oneself open to transformation through the impact of another.” Perhaps unbeknownst to Mitchell, Jung had said something strikingly similar as early as 1929: “For two personalities to meet is like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed. In any effective psychological treatment the doctor is bound to influence the patient: but this influence can only take place if the patient has a reciprocal influence on the doctor.”

Sandor Ferenczi, the Hungarian psychoanalyst born two years before Jung, also stressed the mutuality of the relationship. All three, Jung, Ferenczi and Mitchell conclude that the patient grows as each member of the analytic couple is open to experiencing the emotional impact they have on one another.

This leaves us with the following question: what does the therapist then do in response to the distressing feelings of all kinds that come up in working with the patient? The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion suggested that all the emotional experiences we have in the work are intimately related to patient’s efforts to communicate to us. Far from wanting to get rid of disturbing affects, his perspective encourages us to focus on them in the hope that we can begin to make meaning which can then be offered back to the patient over time.

This is our second year-long class exploring working at the intersection of Jungian and relational psychoanalysis. Each seminar will explore both Jung’s work and some element of contemporary relational psychoanalysis. We will study the power of the therapeutic relationship and the mutual influence of patient and therapist from a range of perspectives, hoping to gain some insight into the mystery of mutual healing that occurs regularly in our consulting rooms.